

# Strengthen activities in monga-hit areas

Adviser urges NGOs

**BSS, Dhaka**

LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal yesterday called upon the non-government organisations (NGOs) to strengthen their activities in monga-hit areas side by side with government efforts.

The adviser made the call at the inaugural function of a two-day event titled 'Unnoyoner Jonyo Shouhardo (Building Alliance for Development)' marking the CARE Bangladesh Shouhardo Dibosh at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city.

The Ministry of Local Government Rural Development

(LGRD) and Cooperatives and CARE Bangladesh jointly organised the event.

Secretary of Local Government Division Safar Raj Hossain, Mission Director of USAID Roger Carlson and Country Director of CARE Bangladesh Steve Wallace attended the function.

Iqbal said the goal of the programme is to reduce chronic and transitory food insecurity of 400,000 vulnerable households in 18 districts of Bangladesh by 2009.

Talking to the journalists, he said the programme will create employment generation, which will help remove monga in various parts of the country.

The adviser also called for translating three major plans of the conceptual framework of food security -- food availability, access to food and utilisation of food -- as incorporated in the National Food Policy of Bangladesh 2006 into action.

Describing the importance of the programme, the adviser said through this programme CARE will further amplify the voices of the poor in ways that it influences public opinion, development practices and policy at all levels.

A total of 18 stalls have been set up in the two-day programme.

## COP ACTION ON JOURNOS

### Akbar's posting as AIG won't affect probe

Says IGP

**UNB, Dhaka**

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) yesterday met with Inspector General of Police and discussed about the posting of a police officer who was closed following police action on journalists in Chittagong a year ago.

IGP Nur Mohammad assured BFUJ leaders that posting of Ali Akbar Khan as AIG would not affect the investigation into the incident.

Akbar was attached to the police headquarters for more than a year.

Now he has been given posting as AIG with the status of Superintendent of Police, IGP told the journalist leaders.

He expressed the hope that a cordial relationship with journalists will grow with the police force.

# Ensure right to information to curb corruption

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The right to information is vital for the very existence of a country, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said it helps in taking correct decisions and curbing corruptions.

The speakers also called for social movement to ensure access to information not only in government offices but also in private sector organisations.

They said lack of information is one of the major causes of massive corruption in the country.

The roundtable was organised by Campaign on Citizen's Right to Information at the National Press Club auditorium in the city.

Former adviser to caretaker government A S M Shajahan presided over the roundtable where member-secretary of the organisation Zakir Hossen delivered the keynote speech.

Before the roundtable, a book on the right to information was launched.

The former adviser formally unveiled the cover of the book saying that the necessity of such a book had been felt since long.

"The right to information is vital because people have the right to know how their money is spent," he said, adding that in the past, massive corruption took place in government offices through hiding information.



PHOTO: STAR

Former adviser to a caretaker government A S M Shajahan speaks at a roundtable at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and on his left is Zakir Hossen.

Shajahan said publication of the book and holding of the roundtable on corruption were very timely.

These would accelerate the pace of movement for right to information, he observed.

Former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Saleh Ahmed said there is no alternative to right to information for fair running of a government and attaining socio-economic development.

Giving an example of sufferings owing to lack of information, he said National Census Report of 2001 was not published by the

government's Bureau of Statistics.

"If the report were published, a national crisis could have been avoided," he said, adding that the report could give an idea about the possible number of voters in the country.

President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul pointed out that the right to information is not only necessary for journalists but also for all people.

He observed that getting information from multinational companies and private sector organisations is tougher than having it from government offices.

He also demanded an act ensuring right to information saying that some existing laws obstruct free flow of information.

Engineer Mohammad Shish urged the Transparency International of Bangladesh (TIB) to resume investigations of major incidents of corruption.

He alleged that the move against corruption has slowed down.

Dr Sultana Alam urged people to boycott corrupt people in the society.

"We are so gentle that we do nothing against corrupt people in the pretext of courtesy," she lamented.

Dr Tofail Ahmed said the main reason for corruption is lack of access to information.

People do not know about the activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) though these organisations often speak out for right to information, he added.

Ahmed Swapan demanded access to information in all major financial deals in the country.

"We observe various social disasters in the country due to lack of information," Zakir Hossen said, adding hundreds of people die every year in the coastal belt owing to lack of timely weather forecasts.

He said private organisations can start social audit of their accounts and disseminate the information among people.